FAST

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PUBLISHED BY:
BILAL MUSLIM MISSION OF TANZANIA
P.O.BOX 20033
DAR ES SALAAM

ISBN : 9976 956 31 2

Extract from the
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

"Saum" or Fast is the 2nd most important "Ibadat" of Islam (after Salat). This Unit is a collection of my five articles, dealing with various aspects of the month of Ramadhan and Eid-ul-Fitr. Also, some extracts from an article "Fasting" (from Readers'Digest) have been given as Appendix.
I could have divided these articles into various lessons subject-wise. But it was felt that it would lessen the impact of the articles.

Dar es Salaam 6/12/1971
S. S. Akhtar Rizvi

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition contained no Masail (Rules of She-riat) of fast. In this edition, important and necessary Masael have been added; these Masael are according to the Fatwa of Agha Seyyid Abul- Qasim Al-Khoui.
If the reader wants more details about any rule, he may contact any religious scholar or write to the Mission.

Dar es Salaam
27th Rajab 1394 16th August 1974
S.S.Akhtar Rizvi

THE FRUITS OF FASTING FOR THE SERVANTS OF ALLAH

RAMADHAN has come. Muslims all over the world are fasting from dawn until sunset.

The philosophy of the fast is well-known: It gives the servants of Allah a training in discipline, self-control, unquestioned obedience to God. It cultivates self-denial in Man so that he may be able to understand the problems facing the community and society.

Islam is a religion, compact and well-balanced. It is not just a collection of some unrelated ideologies and traditions. There is good reason behind every enjoinment, every tenet and every precept.

So compact is the whole Islamic system, in fact, that you cannot believe in it piece-meal; you have either to take it in its entirety or leave it in total; you cannot select from it.

Take, for example, the lunar system of the Islamic calendar. Though Islam recognises the solar year for the purpose of Zakat and Khums (agricultural taxes etc.), it insists on following the lunar system, in other matters, like fast and pilgrimage.

Why this double standard? The reason is simple enough. Islam is an universal religion; and the fast and pilgrimage are intended for the whole mankind, wherever they may be living.

And, the fact is one cannot pinpoint a single minute in a whole year which is equally convenient for the whole world.
Season and climate in the northern hemisphere are poles apart, literally, from those of the southern hemisphere.

Distance from the equator creates great differences between the climates of the lands situated in the same hemisphere.

Altitude belies all the theoretical calculations of geographers (the people of Europe did not believe, at first, that there was a snow-capped mountain — Kilimanjaro — near the Equator).

Directions of the mountains make two nearby lands radically opposed to each other in climate (had the Himalayas been created North-South, instead of East West, the cold winds of North would have made the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent a second Tibet). The distance from the sea; the path of the sea-currents; direction of seasonal winds ----all these things have profound effect upon the climate and seasons of a given land.
For example, the Gulf Street, being a hot current, makes countries warm even in Arctic Circle; and Dar es Salaam, being on the sea shore,experiences less temperature changes than the interior regions.

I have described some of the factors which have effect upon the climates and seasons of a particular land. These factors have made the world a museum in which every conceivable kind of climate can be found in one or another corner at every given moment of the year.

Thus, it is just impossible to select a time of the year which can be equally suitable and acceptable to the whole world, for such rules as fasting and pilgrimage.

Had Islam accepted solar calendar for such religious functions it would have done a great injustice to a greater part of the world.

What would have been suitable, for instance, to India, could have been most inconvenient for Africa and/or America.

So, Allah selected a lunar calendar. As this system is shorter by about ten days than the solar calendar, the seasons rotate in it, and the cycle becomes complete in about 33 years.

Thus a man of about 48 years of age, anywhere in the world, experiences every facility-and every hardship which the climate of his land can offer during Ramadhan.

Thus, nobody is favoured; and nobody is discriminated against.

Likewise, in pilgrimage: If a certain period of solar year would have been fixed, majority of the Muslims would have found themselves unable to go to Mecca. A farmer, in whose region it would have been cultivating or harvesting time, could never go to Hajj. Neither could a civil servant whose holidays did not coincide with the pilgrimage period. But, in a lunar system, the farmer can wait until the rotation of the seasons brings the Hajj in his off-season; and the civil servant can wait until it falls in his holiday time.

It is just one example of what I had said earlier — Islam is a compact unit in which every part has the utmost significance for other parts.

Pilgrimage, fast, lunar calendar, universality of Islam, equality of its followers in every respect in the eyes of God— these things may seern^ unrelated to each other to a layman. But, in fact, they are closely knit together and none of them can be neglected or torn without destroying the whole fabric.

During Ramadhan, Muslims abstain from eating and drinking, sexual relations and such things. A Shia Ithna-Asheri has to abstain, in addition, from putting his head in water and from speaking a lie, however immaterial, about God, prophets, Imams and Bibi Fatima, the daughter of the Holy Prophet.

But it is only the external part of the fast. The soul and spirit of fast is something deeper. This aspect of the fast can very easily be explained in the words of our sixth Imam, Jafer as-Sadique (a. s.).

He said: "Your fast day should not be like ordinary days. When you fast, all your senses —. eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet — must fast with you. " How can these organs fast?

Eyes: Keep your eyes off unlawful things and objects; spend this most precious gift of God in good causes and pious acts; read the Qur'an, Duas, and books of knowledge.

Ears: Abstain from hearing unlawful gossip, lies, false statements, music and obscene topics; pay attention towards sermons and topics of learning.

Tongue: Do not tell lies or useless tales, do not spread rumours, and do not indulge in damaging gossip about other persons; keep aloof from falsity. Use the power of speech in spreading the word of God, in creating good will in the society.

Hands: Do not inflict injury upon others by your actions; instead strive to help them as far as possible.

Feet: Do not go towards, forbidden places, like bars and cinemas. Do not run between people creating strife. Go towards those places where God is remembered; and where you can find the means to purify your soul.

And, above all, your heart and your mind must be with you in fasting. Because fast, in its real sense, will remain incomplete unless your thoughts, your emotions, your actions — in short, all aspects of your life __ become pure, clean and free from blemish.

Thus, the fast should create in us an instinctive obedience to the Law of God.

I have heard about some people thinking that the fast of Ramadhan was not meant for the 20th century; or that the factory workers should be exempted from this obligation.

I think such big-headed persons are really in need of fasting more than anybody else. I mean, if a Muslim is unruly enough to disobey the commands of God, he should be made to fast so that he can acquire the habit of unquestioned obedience to God.

Such persons are the fittest candidates for fasting. They must read the commandments of Qur'an, *"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you. . . . . .that ye may (learn) self-restraint ..."* (Qur'an, 2:183).

Self-restraint, piety, sympathy and purity of soul, ; these are the fruits of fasting. Let us strive to achieve as much benefit as we can from this Holy Month of God.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RAMADHAN

The Month of Ramadhan is the holiest one in the Islamic calendar and begins with all its social, moral and spiritual blessings. The following sentences of an invocation point to some of these blessings:-

"O Allah, this is the month of Ramadhan, in which Thou didst sent the Quran as a guide for people and as a clear sign to differentiate between right and wrong; and it is the month of fasting, month of prayers, month of returning (to Thee) and month of repentance; it is the month of forgiveness and mercy . . . ; the month in which is the 'Night of Qadr' which is better than thousand months . . . . ; O Allah Bless Muhammad and his progeny . . and keep me free for Thy worship and for reciting Thy Book. "

It appears from the above sentences that some amongst the blessings of this month are the Qur'ãn, the Night of Qadr, the repentance from sins and mutual understanding and forgiveness.

According to Islamic belief, every action, whether good or bad, carries more weight in this month. Thus, charity is a virtue at all times, but is more virtuous in this month; and injustice is an evil at all times, but is more evil in these days. Reciting Qur'ãn is a commendable deed whole year around, but during the fast it assumes a far greater significance. The Holy Prophet has said: "Every thing has its own spring season, and the spring of the Qur'ãn is the month of Ramadhan. "

It was in this month that the Qur'ãn was revealed to the Holy Prophet. According to his words, the Qur'ãn is "the deliverer from wilderness, eyesight for the blind, pardon for the sinner, light in blackness, safety from disaster, rescue for the castaway, clarity in the chaos, and the means to reach safely from this world to the life hereafter; and herein is the perfection of your religion; and the path away from the Qur'ãn goes to Hell only."

One of the miracles of the Qur'ãn is its everlasting freshness even after such long crushing centuries. The Holy Prophet said that everything becomes old by usage and passage of time except the Qur'ãn, because its treasure would never exhaust and its wonders would never cease. Mr. James A . Michener refers to this aspect of the Book in "Islam --- the Misunderstood Religion" (Readers' Digest, May, 1955) in these words: "The Koran is probably the most often read book in the world, surely the most often memorised, and possibly the most influential in the daily life of the people who believe in it.... It is neither poetry nor ordinary prose, yet it possesses the ability to arouse its hearers to ecstasies of faith."

Laura Veccia Vaglieri writes in "Apologi de I'Islamisme" a translation of which runs as follows: "But there is another proof of the Divinity of the Qur'ãn; it is the fact that it has been preserved intact through the ages since the time of its revelation till the present day..... Read and re-read by the Muslim world, this book does not rouse in the faithful any weariness; it rather, through repetition, is more loved every day. It gives rise to a profound feeling of awe

and respect in the one who reads it or listens to it. "

But we must remember that reciting the Qur'ãn is just a step towards the ultimate goal: understanding and following. Allah says: *Do they not earnestly seek to understand the Qur'ãn, or are their hearts locked up by them? (Qur'ãn, 47:24.).*

Reading the Qur'ãn with proper understanding bears the fruits of spiritual and moral upliftment and material and intellectual advancement. It is better to read a few verses with meditation rather than finishing the whole book in a day like a parrot without knowing what is said.

The Qur'ãn is the purest and highest of Arabic literature. But those who depend upon the translations for Qur'ãnic knowledge often fail to appreciate its lofty standard. First of all, there is the difficulty of translating this book into any other language; because in the words of A.J. Arbury, it is "a foreign idiom, for the Koran is God's revelation in Arabic, and the emotive and evocative qualities of the original disappear almost totally in the skilfullest translation." (The Holy Koran, an introduction; London, 1953).

But according to the same author, "bad translation is not the whole story by any means . . . No, the fault lies not so much in the manner of translation as in the manner of reading the translations. The root of the trouble is that the ordinary reader, and for that .matter the extraordinary reader as well, has not been sufficiently advised how to read the Koran . . . The Koran, like the poetry it resembles in so many ways, is best sampled a little at a time; and that little deserves and needs meditation."

Laura Veccia Vaglieri comments : "On the whole we find in it a collection of wisdom which can be adopted by the most intelligent of men, the greatest of philosophers and the most skilful of politicians."

If a man recites the Qur'ãn with meditation and understanding, he would learn morales which would help him acquire spiritual perfection; he would feel encouraged to follow the foot-prints of the men of God; he would be sorry for whatever sins and mistakes he might have committed in his life. This will make him turn towards God with a soul full of gratitude for all the blessings bestowed upon him by God, and full of remorse for all his misbehaviours.

It is for this reason that the month of Ramadhan is described as the month of repentance. The Holy Prophet has said: "There is no intercessor better than repentance." Allah in His grace forgives all sins and transgressions if a sinner repents sincerely. The operative word is "Sincerely", A repentance without a change of heart is no repentance. It must produce change in habit, honesty in dealing, love and fear of God in actions.

According to Imam Ali, "repentance must have six elements: the repentant must be really sorry for what he had done; he must have firm determination not to do it again; he must make amends for whatever wrongs

he might have done to others; he must fulfil all the obligations of religion previously neglected; he should fast long enough to melt away the flesh grown of unclean and unlawful food; and he should feel the taste of obedience to Allah as he was previously enjoying the taste of sin."

When a man repents sincerely, Allah makes him as clean as he was the day he was born. The Holy Prophet has said: "One who repents from sin is like the one who never committed any sin."

It is obvious from the above discourse that the month of Ramadhan and its fast purify the soul and bring a man nearer to Allah. "Fast is a shield against Hell", said the Holy Prophet. The fast mentioned in this tradition is not merely abstinence from food and drink. It is an act of self-denial for the love of God. And this voluntary self-denial imposes a very high discipline , where the external regulations occupy the lowest rung of the ladder. Imam Ali said: "Many are the people whose only share in the fast is the hunger and thirst."

The measure of a man's nobility is his love of, and obedience to, God. When for a whole month he follows the words of Allah unquestioningly, without regret and without complaint, and when he spends his time in prayer, charity, humility and noble works, should one wonder if he gets fully disciplined to obey each and every command of God unhesitatingly and spontaneously without any thought of avoiding or dodging any order.

A fast which produces such results is surely a shield against Hell, and is worthy of the pronouncement of Allah: "Fast is for me and I will reward it Myself."

EID-UL-FITR;
A UNIQUE FESTIVAL TIME OF JOY FOR MUSLIMS

Eid-ul-Fitr is a unique festival. It has no connection with any historical event nor is it related to the changes of seasons or cycles of agriculture. It is not a festival related in any way to worldly affairs.

Its significance is purely spiritual. It is the day when the Muslims thank Allah for having given them the will, the strength and the endurance to observe fast and obey His commandment during the holy month of Ramadhan.

This day, in Muslim world, brings rejoicing and happiness. The rejoicing is not, however, at the departure of the month of Ramadhan; it is the happiness which man feels after successfully completing an important task.

So far as the passing away of the month of Ramadhan is concerned, Muslim religious leaders of the early days of Islam always felt profound sorrow when it came to an end, as they felt that they were being deprived of the spiritual blessings which were associated with the month of fasting.

To show the original Islamic feeling at the end of Ramadhan, I am quoting some of the sentences from an invocation by Imam Zainul-Abedeen. He says:-

"O Lord, Thou hast ordained Ramadhan to be one of the most chosen .. .. ; and Thou hast distinguished it from all other months, and chosen it out of all other seasons and periods; and given it preference to all the times of the year, by having sent the Qur'an and the light of guidance in it, and by having increased the faith, and by having enjoined the observance of fast in it, and by encouraging us to stand up for prayer at night, and by placing in it the glorious 'Night of Qadr' which is better than a thousand months.

"Therefore, in accordance with Thy command, we kept fast in its days, and with Thy help, we stood up for prayers in its nights; presenting ourselves, by means of its fasts and prayers,.for Thy Mercy which Thou dist offer to us.

"And, verily, this month of Ramadhan stayed amongst us a welcome stay; and gave us a righteous company; bestowing upon us the most excellent benefits in the universe. Now, it departs from us at the completion of its time.

"Therefore, we bid it farewell as we did good-bye to one whose departure is hard upon us and makes us sad; and whose parting away makes us feel lonely."

Then he turns towards the month of Ramadhan, speaking in an endearing tone:-

"How much did we long for thee yesterday; and how intense will be our eagerness for thee tomorrow. Peace be on thee and thy ex cellence of which we have been deprived, and thy blessings which will no longer be with us."

These few words are the mirror which show the true Islamic feeling towards the month of Ramadhan and its blessings and spiritual benefits.

Eid-ul-Fitr is related to such a month of blessings, because it is on this day that the strict restrictions of the preceding month are lifted. Unfortunately, in some places, this resumption of the normal activities is misinterpreted as a licence to indulge in activities prohibited in Islam, like gambling, etc.

Fortunately, such trends are not common yet; but such people should be made to understand the significance of Eid-ul-Fitr. Religious observances of the Eid-ul-Fitr are designed to offer thanks to Allah that He helped us in accomplishing the aim of Ramadhan.

Surely, it would be an affront to Allah if anybody, after thanking Him for completing that spiritual training, goes right away sinning against Him!

Had such person known the meaning and purpose of Eid-ul-Fitr, he could not have indulged in such un-Islamic activities. Eid-ul-Fitr can be interpreted as a three-fold blessing:
First it provides one more occasion for the Muslims to thank God and remember His blessings.

Secondly, it affords an opportunity of spiritual stock-taking, after the month of Ramadhan. A Muslim can now ponder over the strength (or weakness) of his will power; he can see, in the mirror of Ramadhan, what were the strong (or weak) points of his character, because under the stress of fasting, the hidden qualities (or evils) of human character come to surface in such clear way which is, perhaps, not possible otherwise.
Thus a man gets a chance of self-diognosis of the traits of his character, which probably no one else may ever detect.

Thirdly, it enjoins the well-to-do persons to share a portion of what they have with their poor brethren. On the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr, a Muslim is obliged to give to the needy food-stuff at the rate of a prescribed weight, on behalf of himself and of every member of his family, including servants and guests who were sheltered under his roof on that night. It would certainly be pleasing to God if we did not forget these lessons after Eid-ul-Fitr.

Incidentally, here the difference between religious and materialistic outlooks becomes sharper. Religion exhorts a man to give, by his own free will, a share of his wealth to those who are less fortunate, and to give it for obtaining the blessings of God. Materialism teaches him to snatch from others whatever they have got without any regard to the moral or ethical questions involved.

Thus, the religion tries to strengthen the highest qualities of the human character; materialism strives to make him the slave of the lowest animal instincts degrading him to the level of the beasts.

On this day, special prayers are held the world over, between sunrise and noon, when the Muslims assemble, in large congregations, wearing their best dresses standing shoulder to shoulder, demonstrating for everyone the universal brotherhood which is another distinguishing feature of Islam --- the

religion of God.

In East Africa, special Eid barazas. are held in which the Muslims, as well as the non-Muslims, participate whole-heartedly. Thus, it provides the country-men with a chance to strengthen the ties of brotherly love and a national unity.

Let us re-dedicate our life to the cause of humanity, which is the best way to demonstrate our love of God. Let us resolve that our energies, in the coming year, will be directed towards strengthening a society based on mutual respect, brotherly love, and universal understanding.

Let us decide that, in the coming year, we will build a social order which would bring not only the material benefits, but also the spiritual satisfaction.

And, in the end, let us pray to God in these words:
"O Lord, make us clean from our errors by the close of the month of Ramadhan, and take us out of our sins when our fast comes to end. And bless us on this Eid day, the day of our festival and our break-fast; and let it be the best day, which passed over us, and forgive us our sins known and unknown."

THE IDEAL OF ISLAMIC CHARITY

Happy is the man who makes others happy. Eid-ul-Fitr is the practical demonstration of this lesson.

Imam Jaffer As-Sadique said that Muslims have been asked to fast "so that rich may feel the pangs of hunger and thus realise the plight of his poor and needy brethren". Looking at fast from this angle, we can easily understand the philosophy of Zakat-ul-Fitrah, which every Muslim is obliged to pay on the eve of Eid-ul.Fitr. A Muslim must give to the needy food-stuff at the rate of a prescribed weight, on behalf of himself and of every member of his family, including servants and guests who were sheltered under his roof at sunset.

That Zakat must be paid before Eid prayer; and it is preferable to pay the price in cash(instead of the foodstuff), so that the recipient may purchase some necessary items, like clothes etc., for his children before taking them out for prayers.

According to Islamic ethics, our joy and happiness are not complete unless we make our less fortunate brethren happy. It is a lesson worth remembering,especially in this era of materialism, when scant regard is paid to the moral and ethical values which are so much emphasised by religion.

Our children are taught nowadays that only the fittest has a right to survive, and weaklings are bound to perish. In this educational back-ground, why should they care if a poor man dies of hunger? He is a misfit, and he must perish.

But the teaching of religions is quite different. Religion teaches us to care; it enjoins the strong and wealthy to help their weak and poor brethren.

Islam has set a very high standard for charity. Charity must be in the way of God; it should expect no reward or return in this world; it should not be marred by subsequent references or reminders and never should any annoyance or injury be caused to the recipient. In the present-day jargon, the aid must be without any strings. God says in the Qur'an:
"Kind words and covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury (to the self-respect of the recipient)".

Admonishing the believers not to nullify their charity by reminders and by causing injury to the recipients, God condemns false charity which is done so that others may see how generous the donor is. God compares such so-called charity to "a hard barren rock, on which is a little soil. On it falls heavy rain which leaves it a bare rock. " So a false charity will be washed away on the Day of Judgment, leaving the selfish and egotistic motives naked for everyone to see and despise.

In contrast to it is the true charity, done for the sake of Allah and with conviction of faith. Such a charity is likened to "a garden, high and fertile.

Heavy rain falls on it and makes it yield a double increase of harvest; and if it receives no heavy rain, light moisture is enough for it."

True charity is also likened to "a grain of corn; it groweth seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains; and God gives manifold increase to whom He pleases. "

And how will fare the false charity? It is wasted and will not do the donor any good when it would be needed most. Allah has explained it in this way: "Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date-palms and vines, and streams flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruits, while he is stricken with old age and his children are not strong enough (to look after themselves), that it should be caught in a whirlwind with fire therein and be burnt up? Thus does God make clear to you His signs so that you may ponder. "

According to Islamic ethics, a donor should remain obliged to the poor brother who accepted his charity. It may seem strange to worldly people like us. But look at it from Islamic point of view and you will understand.

A donor helps the recipient in this world by giving him certain aid or some material benefit which is bound to perish in due course. But that charity brings the donor nearer to the Grace of Allah, which is ever-lasting, and which will benefit him on the Day of Judgment. Thus the recipient of charity helps the donor in a far better way than the aid which he receives from the donor.

It has been declared in Islam that poor are the family of Allah and the rich persons are the agents of Allah. An agent has no right to despise the children of his principal when he is required to pay some of the principal's money to his children.

This is the ideal of Islamic charity. On this auspicious day of Eid-ul-Fitr, we are reminded of this sacred duty by the rules relating to Zakat-ul-Fitrah. Shallow would be our joy if we shut our eyes from the plight of our poor brethren.

The fast of Ramadhan has shown us how it feels to be hungry; Eid-ul-Fitr is showing us the real meaning of happiness. Let us remember these two important lessons in our daily life.

EID-UL-FITR SERVES THREE PURPOSES

Eid-ul-Fitr is the most important festival in the Islamic calendar. The day does not mark any historical event or episode; but its existence provides the Muslim for an occasion to offer thanks to Allah for having given him the strength and the will to observe fast during the holy month of Ramadhan.

It is also an occasion for prayers when the Muslims gather in large congregations, standing shoulder to shoulder, to demonstrate the equality and equity which is the inherent feature of Islamic society all over the world.

But the greatest significance of this day of rejoicing lies in the fact that on this day every Muslim is enjoined to give the needy food at the rate of the prescribed weight per every member of his household, including servants and guests who were sheltered under his roof the preceding evening.

Eid-ul-Fitr then serves a three-fold purpose: It places upon every Muslim the obligation to remember Allah and offer Him thanks; it affords him an opportunity of spiritual stock-taking in that he can now ponder over the strength of his will or the weakness of his character, as the case may be, which manifested itself during the
preceding month; it also is the day for the haves to share a portion of what they have with the have-nots.

And, for those persons who disobeyed this command of Allah this is the day of an end to the month-long pangs of conscience, inner struggle and continuous realisation of the feebleness of their character. No more will they have to argue, without much conviction, against fasting'. No more will they have to think up an excuse every morning for not fasting'. No more will they have to say "Oh, but fasting is old-fashioned; it was not meant for the modern world."

It is not my object here to explain the philosophy of fasting. Almost everyone realises the spiritual, social, scientific and medical benefits which are derived from fasting. But so far as a Muslim, a true believer, is concerned, it should be sufficient that fasting is prescribed in the Holy Book, and as such is the command of Allah. Should one seek to justify Allah's commands?

The measure of a man's love for his Creator is his unquestioned obedience to the commands of the Creator. When for whole month a Muslim has obeyed Allah, unquestioningly, without complaint, without regret, and ,when he has spent his time in prayers, in humility and in charity, should one wonder, if at the end of this period, the Creator may Himself turn to such creature of His and say: "It is now for thee to ask for Me to give."

Ramadhan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar, is the period when man is subjected to a supreme test. Without compulsion, without coercion, the Muslims throughout the world obey God; and every day from dawn to sunset abstain not only from sensual pleasures but even from the necessities of life like food and drink. Some do this in shivering cold, some in

burning heat, some do it where days are short and others where days are interminably long. The rich fast as well as the poor, the master as well as the servant; the parents as well as the child; the ruler as well as the. subject. They all fast, regardless of the colour or their social position.

Having done this, for one whole month, today on this auspicious day of Eid-ul-Fitr, every Muslim should be ready to face the year that lies ahead with renewed strength, greater understanding and universal goodwill. He has fasted to acquire piety, discipline and self-control. Now the habit of unquestioning obedience to God is
cultivated in his heart and mind. He is now trained to accept the commands of Allah, in the remaining eleven months of the year, with the same unwavering loyalty. He has emerged from the month of Ramadhan with a new personality and a stronger character, confident of his ability to subordinate his desire to his will, his emotion to his intellect.

No longer will it be difficult for him to refrain from intoxicating drinks; no longer will he turn away from his less fortunate brethren; no longer will he fail to understand and appreciate the pain of hunger, the pangs of thirst.

So the training period of Ramadhan has come to an end. Now we are entering the era of normal activities of life. If the lessons learnt in Ramadhan have left their marks upon our character, we are entitled to enjoy Eid-ul-Fitr.

IMPORTANT RULES OF SHERIAT CONCERN FAST AND PRAYER OF EIDAIN

SAUM :

Saum means to abstain from those things which break the fast, from Sub-he-Sadiqu (true dawn) to Maghrib-time, in obedience to Allah.

WAJIB SAUMS :

8 Saums are Wajib :

1. Month of Ramazan;
2. Quaza of the month of Ramazan;
3. 3rd day of Itikaf;
4. 10 days of 'badal-ul-hadi' in Hajj;
5. Saum of Kaffara becoming Wajib for various reasons,
6. Saum which becomes Wajib on account of Nazar, Ahad or Quasam;
7. Saum of Kaffara of breaking or leaving fast;
8. Saum which has become Quaza from father, becomes Wajib on his eldest son after his death (It is better to include 'mother' also in this rule).

CONDITIONS OF SAUM:

These are the conditions for the validity of Saum :-

1. Sanity;
2. Islam;
3. Iman;
4. Remaining free from Haidh and Nifas for whole day;
5. Not remaining a 'Musafir' at the time of Zawal;
6. Not being in danger of illness by keeping fast.

If a Musafir returns to his home-town or reaches a place where he intends to stay 10 days, before Zawal, and has not used anything which breaks the fast, he must do 'niyyet' of fast, and his fast will be valid. Likewise, if he begins his journey after Zawal, his fast of that day will remain valid.

If a person is afraid that by keeping fast his illness will increase, or he will become sick by fasting, or that the treatment of his desease will become more difficult, he must break his fast. If he does keep fast, it would be null and void, and he, in addition, would be committing a sin.

Being 'Baligh' is not a condition of validity of fast; if a child keeps fast, it would be all right. But Fast is not Wajib on a 'minor' (Ghair-Baligh).

Persons Exempted From Saum :
The following persons are exempted from the Saum :

1. 1. & 2. Old man and woman, when owing to their old age and weakness
   (a) it is not possible for them to keep fast, or
   (b) it is vary difficult to fast.

3. A person who has got a disease in which he remains ever thirsty and
   (a) it is not possible, or
   (b) is very difficult, for him to keep fast.

4. The expecting-mother who is afraid
   (a) about her own health or
   (b) the health of the unborn child.

5. The woman who breast-feeds a child (her own or another, woman's)and is afraid that the fast
   (a) would endanger her health or
   (b) the health of the child.

All these 5 types of persons are exempted from fasting on the following conditions :-

1. In cases of (b) they will have to pay Kaffara @ one 'Mudd' (¾ kilogram) wheat, rice or any such stable food, per day to a poor Ithna-asheri. It is 'Ahwat' to pay 1½ kilogram per day.
2. In cases of (a) they are not required to pay any Kaffara; but it is highly recommended.
3. Pregnant woman, or the nursing mother will have to fast in Qaza after delivery or after weaning the child, as the case may be.
4. The thirsty person will have to fast in Qaza, if he is able to do so afterwards.
5. Old man and woman are not required (though recommended) to fast in Qaza if he/she regains his /her strength.

MUFTIRAT

The things or actions which make a fast void (batil) are 10 in number :—

1. and 2. Eating or drinking anything.
3. Sexual relation;
4. Speaking, writing or conveying by sign any lie about Allah, Prophets, Imams, or Bibi Fatima (s.a.);
5. Submerging the head in water;
6. Conveying thick dust, smoke or steam up to throat;
7. Vomiting;
8. Doing any such thing by which semen comes out;
9. Enima with liquid;
10. Remaining in the condition of Janabat, Haiz or Nifas up to Sub-he-Sadique.

Note 1:

All these things break the fast if they are committed intentionally. If a person forgets that he is fasting, and eats or drinks, his fast is correct. Likewise, if he vomits involuntarily, or speaks something about God or Imams which he thinks is correct (though in fact it is wrong), or somebody else pushes him into water and his head goes into welter; or he sees a dust coming towards him and tries his best to protect himself from it but still inhales some of it involuntarily, his fast is correct.

Note 2.

Remaining in the condition of Janabat makes fast batil in the month of Ramazan and in its Qaza only. Other fasts aio not effected by it.

Note 3.

Not doing Ghusl (or Tayammum. if allowed) of Haiz, or Nifas before Subh-e-Sadiqu (true dawn) makes the fast Batil in the month of Ramazan only. Other fasts (including the Qaza of Ramazan) are not affected by it.

Note 4.

When a fast is broken by any of the above-mentioned Muftirat, or when a person does not keep fast (without any excuse, i.e. illness or travel), he has to pay Kaffara, in addition to its Qaza.

KAFFARA

The Kaffara of breaking the fast of one day of Ramazan is:

1. Emancipating a slave;
2. If that is not possible, then.two-months-fast consecutively;
3. and if that is also not possible, then feeding 60 poor Mumins.

Kaffara of breaking the Qaza of one day of Ramazan, if broken after Zawal, is:

1. Feeding 10 poor Mumins;
2. and if that is not possible, then fasting three days.

Kaffara of breaking the fast of specified Nazar is :

1. Emancipating a slaver
2. If that is not possible, then feeding 10 poor Mumins;
3. or clothing 10 poor Mumins;
4. and if he cannot do any of these then, fasting three days.

Note 1.
In feeding, it is enough to give each man 1½ pound wheat or rice.

Note 2.
Whenever in a Kaffara a certain thing is prescribed, its price is not acceptable. For instance, it is not allowed to give money of 1½ pound wheat, or price of shirt and trousers to a poor man. It is obligatory to give him the grain or cloth.

Note 3.
When a fast is broken by any Haram thing, like wine etc., all 3 Kaffaras are to be paid (emancipation of slave, 60 days fast, feeding 60 poor Mumins), as a punishment.,

Note 4.
In two-months-fast, at least 31 days should be fasted consequently. The remaining 29 days may be fasted with gaps.

NAMAZ-E-'EEDAIN

The Muslims observe two big festivals in a year. One as Eed-ul-Fitr and the other is 'Eed-eul-Azha. These two are the days of great festivity.

'Eid-ul-Fitr is observed at the end of the holy month of Ramazan. The fasting creates the feelings of faith, spirituality, patience, contentment, and helping the poor. With a view to express our joy on these feelings we observe Eed. The festivity of the Muslims is not akin to dancing, singing vulgar songs or playing dirty games. We offer our gratefulness to Allah and also offer the Namaz-e-Eed for those religious, spiritual and moral gains which accrue to us in the holy month of Ramazan.

The Muslims offer sacrifice on the day of 'Eed-ul-Azha. Thus they pledge to give away their lives in the way of Allah and that of Islam. This is a great month for the believer. This is the motto of a Muslim's life. In happiness of this pledge, we offer prayer of Eid-ul-Azha.

Prayer of Eid is not Wajib but Sunnat nowadays when our Present Imam is hidden from our eyes. The niyat (intention) of Namaz-e-Eid should be done as follows :-
"I pray two rak'at Namaz of 'Eid-ul-Fitr or 'Eid-ul-Azha Sunnat qurbatan ilallah."

In the first rak'at, after Sura Hamd, Sura A'ala is recited then hands are raised for Qunuut.

DO'A-E-QUNUUT
"Allahumma ahlal Kibriyae wal azamate wa ahlal juude wal jabaruut, wa ahlal afwe warrahmah, wa ahlattaqwa wal maghferah; asaloka behaqqe haazal yaumil lazi ja'altahu lil muslimeena 'eedanw, wa le Muhammadin Sallallaho alaihe we Aal'ehi zukhranw wa karamatanw wa sharafanw wa mazeeda; an tusalieya 'ala Muhammdin wa Aale Muhammadin, ws an tudkhelani fi kulle khairin adkhalta fihe Muhammadan wa Aala Muhammadin wa an Tukhrijani - min kulle Suu-in Akhrajta minho Muhsmmadan. wa Aala Muhammadin. Salawaatoka 'aiaihe wa 'alaihim ajma'een. Allahumma, inni as'aloka khaira ma sa-a-laka behi ibadokassale-huun; wa a'oozo beka mimmasta'aza minho 'ibadokal mukhlesu-un."

In first rak'at, the Qunuut is recited five times along with Takbirs (Allaho Akbar). Then after Rukoo' and Sajda, the second rak'at begins.

In the second rak'at Sura Shams is recited after Sura Hamd.
In Surah Shams Allah has directed man to keep his self pure and to protect himself from sins. After the recitation of this Surah, the Qunnut is again recited but now only four times. Thereafter rukuu, Sajda, Tashahhud and Salaam are done in the usual way.

APPENDIX

NOTE: Here are some extracts from an article published in "Readers' Digest" (March, I968).

FASTING
SWIFT, SURE WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT

Modern medical science is turning to this ancient practice --- and finding that when properly supervised it is safe, painless and effective.

By Blake Clark

When he left school, Gerald Ball stood six foot three and weighed 16 stone 12 lb. At college, playing football and eating at the training table, where no second helpings were permitted, he kept his weight at 16 stone 11 lb. But ten years later he weighed 21 stone 6 lb. , and in another ten years, although he had tried various reducing schemes, 26 stone. "When I see food I have no will power," he said. He knew he had to do something. But what?

At this point, in March, I960, Ball entered Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia for one more try. There Dr. Garfield Duncan and his associates were taking what seemed, drastic measures for overweight sufferers: total deprivation of food for ten days.

For ten days Ball got nothing but water, tea, coffee and vitamins. He was hungry for the first two days. Then his craving disappeared; he lost all appetite for food. He felt better than he had since he was at college. In ten days he lost 25 pounds. Since then, in 27 months, Ball has undergone three more fasts at the hospital and periodic two-day abstentions on his own. He has lost 6 stone 9 lb. , almost a pound a week.

Dr. Duncan is a specialist in the control of diabetes. He has been interested in overweight for many years. As editor of the journal Metabolism, he received an article three years ago from a Dr. Walter Bloom, who had used fasting as a preliminary treatment for nine overweight patients. What caught Dr. Duncan's attention was
Dr. Bloom's observation that his fasters did not mind the deprivation. Dr. Duncan decided to give fasting a try.

Selecting patients for the experiment, Dr. Duncan took only those who had failed to reduce by all the usual methods. These people had been put on 500 to 1,500 calories diets — which they had not kept up. All had taken drugs to reduce appetite (the drugs were effective in most cases for only two or three days, then lost effect). Dr. Duncan insisted that they enter hospital, where they could be carefully observed. He gave them poly-vitamins in therapeutic amounts. They stayed in hospital from five to 14 days. They were weighed each day, and had urine and blood tests.

Results were dramatic. People on low-calorie diets often go for ten days or mere with little or no difference on the scales, because their body had

retained water. But on a total fast, the water-retaining mechanism apparently does not work, and the. faster sees his improvement registered on the scales immediately. Loss of a pound and a half to two pounds a day at first is usual. This exceeds what would be expected on the basis of caloric expenditure.

Added to this gratifying visualization of fat literally pouring off by the pound is the fact that it is coming off without causing most of the patients hunger pangs. One man said, "After that first period ----- which for most people lasts only a day — you are all right." Said another, "When you are fasting, you are a little like a bear hibernating. You can talk and walk about, but you generally spend most of the time resting." (Without food you tire easily.)

Why don't you get hungry? Dr. Duncan discovered the answer to this question, and thereby made a significant contribution to the study of weight: hunger is lessened by the production of ketones, a kind of mild acidosis, in the faster's blood-stream. Blood-serum tests of patients showed that for the first 24 to 48 hours there was no significant ketone level ---- and the faster was hungry. When the tests showed an elevation in the ketone concentration in the blood, the food craving diminished. The doctor can tell whether a person has broken, his fast simply by taking a blood-serum test for the ketones.

Many people wished to stay on the. fast even after 14 days, but Dr. Duncan wanted to be sure there were no unexpected ill-effects. He sent them home on 900 to 1,500 calorie diets which usually exceeded their desire for food for several days. They did not continue to lose weight, however; in fact, many gained a little. As appetites increased, the calorie intake increased as well. This gain, Dr. Duncan and his associates found, could be corrected, by one or two-day fasts at appropriate intervals at the patient's home.

Fasting for other than weight reduction purposes is a time-honoured practice. The Old and New Testaments mention it 74 times. Christ fasted 40 days and 4-0 nights. In Islam there is the universally observed 30-day, sunup-to-sundown fast of Ramadhan, and Buddhists find fasting appropriate to their way of contemplation and asceticism .

The most renowned faster of modern times was Mahatma Gandhi, who in his passive resistance to British rule in India engaged in 15 fasts, three of them lasting 21 days. Usually his only sustenance was hot water, sometimes with lime juice. Although he grew so weak at times that he could not lift a glass, he remained mentally alert, and there is no evidence that he suffered any lasting ill effects.

Perhaps the most carefully observed forbearance from eating was that of A. Levanzin, a lawyer and publisher in Malta, who believed that fasting had cured him, his wife and their two children of serious illnesses. In 1912 he went to the Carnegie Institution in Boston and submitted himself to a 31 day study. Levanzin, who was five feet seven inches tall and weighed 9 stone 8 lb., lived under closest scrutiny day and night, existing on nothing but distilled water. A retinue of specialists made daily tests and observations of his physical

condition, his subjective impressions and mental attitude.

As he himself had predicted, Levanzin had no sensation of hunger, and no desire for food. He experienced no abdominal pain or discomfort. On the 11th day he was conscious of muscular fatigue, but on the 14th day he ran down a flight of stairs without difficulty. His memory, tested daily, was as good at the end as at the beginning.

A year later, to see whether he had suffered in any way from his long self-denial, Levanzin was put through the same tests. He did as well or better on nearly all of them. Said his examiners, "It is an indisputable fact that, according to the tests, there was no lasting evil effect of the fast, either upon muscular strength or mental activity."

ISLAMIC CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

FAST

QUESTIONS

Answer any five questions:-

1. Why Islam adopted Lunar calendar for fast and pilgrimage?
2. Explain in short the purposes of Eid-ul-Fitr.
3. Explain the Importance and Conditions of Repentance.
4. Give the list of 'Muftirat' (the things which break the fast).
5. Who are the persons exempted from fasting ?
6. What is the Kaffara,if a person does not fast without any lawful reason ?
7. Explain the result of the following actions on fast:
   (a) A person gets into water upto his chest.
   (b) Forgetting that he was fasting,he drank water.
   (c) He intentionally, did not do 'Ghusl-e-Janabatf upto the time of prayer of 'Subh'